

ACTIVITY: Swimming after being washed overboard.

CASE: [GSAF 1886.06.17](#)

DATE: Thursday June 17, 1886

LOCATION: Off Bribie Heads, Queensland, Australia.

NAME: Lagoon

DESCRIPTION: He was an 18-year-old male, a South Sea Islander.

BACKGROUND

WEATHER: A very strong east-north-east wind was blowing.

MOON PHASE: Full Moon, June 16, 1886

NARRATIVE: Two cutters, the *Reliance* and the *Nonpariel*, sailed from Maroochie for Brisbane. Lagoon was onboard the *Nonpariel* and was washed overboard during heavy weather. One of the men threw a line to him, but he failed to seize it. The *Reliance* came about but before the cutter could reach him — he was only 12 yards away and an excellent swimmer — he suddenly sank out of sight. It was believed that he had been taken by a shark.

SOURCE: The Brisbane Courier, Monday June 21, 1886, page 4

THE cutter Reliance, having on board Henry Prentice, master, three Europeans, two South Sea Island women, and five Polynesian boys, left Maroochie at midnight on Thursday for Brisbane, and was accompanied by the cutter Nonpareil, in charge of Clement Prentice, besides whom there were on board a European and four South Sea Islanders. After going out to sea very heavy weather was experienced, and there was some difficulty in working the vessels. When approaching the white beacon off Bribie Heads, about three miles from Caloundra, a very strong east-north-east wind was blowing, the Reliance then being about sixty yards to the leeward of the Nonpareil. There was a heavy easterly swell on at the time, and a wave broke just as the Nonpareil was on its crest, striking the cutter and causing her to heel over and lie across the wave for about two minutes before she righted again. A South Sea Islander, known by the name of Lagoon, 18 years of age, who was lying aft, was washed overboard. On hearing the cries of distress, one of the men threw a line to the South Sea Islander, but he failed to seize it. The master of the Reliance luffed into the wind and came about, but before he could reach the South Sea Islander he suddenly sank, about twelve yards from the Reliance. It is stated by Lagoon's brother, who was on board one of the cutters, that he was an excellent swimmer, and it is surmised that he was dragged under by a shark. No further mishap occurred until the cutters arrived at Campbell's wharf on Friday night, when one of the South Sea Islanders, named New Potts, on board the Reliance died of consumption. It appears that New Potts had a little while back been an inmate of the Brisbane Hospital suffering from consumption, but afterwards left and returned to his employers, Messrs. Fielding and Dickson, Buderim Mountain Plantation. He was returning to Brisbane again, being too unwell to work, and had to be carried on board.